CLAIMS

1. A method for selecting between or allocating among a plurality of alternatives, comprising:

determining a risk tolerance for a user;

presenting a plurality of attributes related to the alternatives for selection by the user; and

performing at least one of ranking the alternatives or allocating among the alternatives in response to analysis of the plurality of attributes and the risk tolerance of the user.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the risk tolerance of the user comprises evaluating responses by the user to a plurality of risk tolerance questions.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the risk tolerance of the user comprises evaluating a selection by the user between at least one riskless asset hypothetical and a risky asset hypothetical.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein determining the risk tolerance of the user comprises the user selecting an acceptable percentage of the risky asset relative to the riskless asset.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising calculating a utility or certainty equivalent for each of the plurality of alternatives as a function of the risk tolerance of the user and information associated with each of the plurality of alternatives.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein each of the plurality of alternatives is a different investment product and the information comprises historical returns for the investment product.

7. The method of claim 5, further comprising ranking each of the plurality of alternatives relative to one another in response to the utility or certainty equivalent of each alternative.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting a series of importance of difference rating questions related to the attributes selected by the user.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein presenting the series of importance of difference questions comprises presenting a first hypothetical paired with a second hypothetical for each attribute selected by the user for the user to choose a degree of importance of difference between the first hypothetical and the second hypothetical.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the first hypothetical comprises a first predetermined value and the second hypothetical comprises a second predetermined value lower than the first predetermined value.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting a series of trade-off questions related to the attributes selected by the user.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein presenting the series of trade-off questions comprises presenting a plurality of sets of hypotheticals, each set of hypotheticals including a first pair of hypotheticals and a second pair of hypotheticals for the user to choose a degree of preference between the first pair of hypotheticals and the second pair of hypotheticals.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein each first pair of hypotheticals comprises:

a first hypothetical including a predetermined value of one attribute; and

a second hypothetical including a predetermined value of another attribute, wherein each second pair of hypotheticals includes:

a third hypothetical including another predetermined value of the one attribute higher or lower than the predetermined value of the first hypothetical; and

a fourth hypothetical including another predetermined value of the other attribute lower or higher than the predetermined value of the second hypothetical.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising at least one of ranking the alternatives or allocating among the alternatives in response to one of a conjoint analysis and an analytic hierarchical process of the plurality of attributes.

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting at least one of the alternatives ranked or allocated in response to the risk tolerance of the user and one of a conjoint analysis or an analytic hierarchical process of the plurality of attributes.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting at least one of the alternatives ranked or allocated in response to a weighting between the risk tolerance of the user and the analysis.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising presenting a weighting scale for the user to allocate a percentage of weighting between the risk tolerance and preferences from the analysis.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein presenting the weighting scale comprises presenting a slider bar for the user to select a percentage of weighting.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the weighting is selected by one other than the user.

20. The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting the ranked alternatives for selection by the user for comparison.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising presenting the plurality of attributes for selection by the user for comparison of the selected attributes for each selected alternative.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising identifying any attributes previously selected by the user as important.

23. The method of claim 21, further comprising presenting the selected alternatives and attributes with any attributes previously selected by the user as important being identified.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein each alternative comprises at least one of an investment manager, an investment product or a combination investment manager and investment product.

25. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a link to a web site for each alternative, if the web site exists for the alternative.

26. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a link to a web page containing information about each alternative.

27. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing one of conjoint analysis or analytic hierarchical processing using attributes selected by the user to determine a user's preferences related to the alternatives.

28. A method for selecting between or allocating among a plurality of alternatives, comprising:

presenting a plurality of risk tolerance questions to a user;

measuring a risk tolerance for the user based on responses of the user to the plurality of risk tolerance questions;

presenting a plurality of attributes related to the alternatives for selection by the user;

performing an analysis of the attributes selected by the user; and

performing at least one of ranking the alternatives or allocating among the alternatives in response to a combination of the risk tolerance of the user and the analysis of the attributes selected by the user.

29. The method of claim 28, further comprising calculating a preference for each alternative as a function of the risk tolerance of the user and information associated with each alternative.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein performing analysis of the attributes comprises performing one of conjoint analysis and analytic hierarchical processing.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein performing analysis of the attributes comprises:

presenting a series of importance of difference rating questions related to the attributes selected by the user;

presenting a series of trade-off questions based on responses of the user to the series of importance of difference rating questions; and

determining a value of importance for each attribute selected by the user based on responses of the user to the series of trade-off questions.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising providing a graphical user interface to present each of the plurality of risk tolerance questions, the plurality of attributes, the series of importance of difference rating questions, and the series of trade-off questions.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein providing the graphical user interface comprises using a software program contained in a computer local to the user.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein providing the graphical user interface comprises using a software program contained in a computer remote to the user.

35. The method of claim 28, further comprising presenting a weighting scale for the user to allocate a percentage of weighting between the risk tolerance and analysis of the attributes.

36. The method of claim 28, further comprising at least one of ranking the alternatives or allocating among the alternatives in response to a weighting between the risk tolerance and the analysis of the attributes selected by the user.

37. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method, comprising:

determining a risk tolerance for a user;

presenting a plurality of attributes for selection by the user; and

performing at least one of ranking the alternatives or allocating among the alternatives in response to analysis of the plurality of attributes and the risk tolerance of the user.

38. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, wherein determining the risk tolerance of the user comprises evaluating responses by the user to a plurality of risk tolerance questions.

39. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, wherein determining the risk tolerance of the user comprises presenting at least one portfolio including a risky asset and a riskless asset for user selection of an acceptable percentage of one of the risky asset or the riskless asset relative to the other.

40. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, further comprising calculating a utility for each of the plurality of alternatives as a function of the risk tolerance of the user and information associated with each of the plurality of alternatives.

41. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, wherein analysis of the plurality of attributes comprises:

presenting a series of importance of difference rating questions related to the attributes selected by the user;

presenting a series of trade-off questions based on responses of the user to the series of importance of difference rating questions; and

determining a value of importance for each attribute selected by the user based on responses of the user to the series of trade-off questions.

42. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, further comprising presenting the alternatives ranked in an order of a combination of a highest utility to a lowest utility in response to analysis of the plurality of attributes and the highest certainty equivalent to lowest certainty equivalent in response to the risk tolerance of the user.

43. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, further comprising presenting the alternatives ranked in an order of a weighting between a highest utility to a lowest utility in response to analysis of the plurality of attributes and a highest certainty equivalent to a lowest certainty equivalent in response to the risk tolerance of the user.

44. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 43, wherein the weighting is selected by the user.

45. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 43, wherein the weighting is selected by one other than the user.

46. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, further comprising presenting the ranked alternatives for selection for comparison by the user.

47. The computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 37, further comprising performing one of conjoint analysis or analytic hierarchical processing using attributes selected by the user to determine a user's preferences related to the alternatives.

48. A system for selecting between or allocating among a plurality of alternatives, comprising:

a plurality of attributes;

a user interface generator adapted to present the plurality of attributes for the user to select those attributes of importance to the user;

an analysis program to determine user preferences of the alternatives based on the analysis of the attributes selected by the user; and

a processor programmed to perform at least one of ranking the alternatives or allocate among the alternatives in response to a combination of the analysis and a risk tolerance of the user.

49. The system of claim 48, further comprising a plurality of risk tolerance questions, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present the plurality of risk tolerance questions to the user and the processor is adapted to determine the risk tolerance of the user by evaluating responses by the user to the plurality of risk tolerance questions.

50. The system of claim 48, further comprising at least one portfolio including a risky asset hypothetical and a riskless asset hypothetical, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present the at least one portfolio for the user to select an acceptable percentage of the risky asset relative to the riskless asset, and wherein the processor is adapted to determine the risk tolerance of the user in response to the acceptable percentage selected by the user.

51. The system of claim 48, wherein the processor is adapted to calculate a certainty equivalent for each of the plurality of alternatives as a function of the risk tolerance of the user and information associated with each of the plurality of alternatives.

52. The system of claim 48, further comprising a series of importance of difference questions related to the attributes selected by the user, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present each of the series of importance of difference questions for response by the user.

53. The system of claim 48, further comprising a first hypothetical paired with a second hypothetical related to each attribute selected by the user, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present each of the paired hypotheticals for the user to select a degree of importance of difference between the first hypothetical and the second hypothetical.

54. The system of claim 48, further comprising a series of trade-off questions related to the attributes selected by the user, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present each of the series of trade-off questions for response by the user.

55. The system of claim 48, further comprising a plurality of sets of hypotheticals, each set of hypotheticals including a first pair of hypotheticals associated with a second pair of hypotheticals, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present each set of

hypotheticals for the user to select a degree of preference between the first pair of hypotheticals and the second pair of hypotheticals.

56. The system of claim 48, further comprising a weighting scale, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present the weighting scale for the user to allocate a percentage of weighting between the risk tolerance and preferences from the conjoint analysis.

57. The system of claim 48, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present the ranked alternatives for the user to select alternatives for comparison.

58. The system of claim 48, wherein the analysis program comprises computer-executable instructions to perform one of a conjoint analysis or an analytic hierarchical process.

59. A system for selecting between or allocating among a plurality of alternatives, comprising:

a user interface generator adapted to:

present a plurality of risk tolerance questions to a user, and

present a plurality of attributes related to the plurality of alternatives; and

a utilities calculation engine operatively associated with the interface generator and adapted to:

determine a risk tolerance for the user based on responses from the user to the risk tolerance questions,

analyze the responses from the user to the questions related to the attributes, and

perform at least one of ranking the alternatives or allocating resources among the alternatives in response to a combination of the risk tolerance of the user and analysis of the attributes.

60. The system of claim 59, wherein the utilities calculation engine comprises one of a conjoint analysis program and an analytic hierarchical process, adapted to analyze responses from the user to the questions related to the attributes and to at least one of rank the alternatives or allocate among the alternatives in response to one of conjoint analysis or AHP.

61. The system of claim 59, further comprising:

a series of importance of difference rating questions related to the attributes selected by the user, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present each of the series of importance of difference rating questions for response by the user; and

a series of trade-off questions based on responses of the user to the series of importance of difference rating questions, wherein the user interface generator is adapted to present each of the series of trade-off questions for response by the user and wherein the utilities calculation engine is adapted to determine a value of importance for each attribute selected by the user based on responses of the user to the series of trade-off questions.

62. The system of claim 59, wherein the user interface generator and the utilities calculation engine comprise computer programs adapted to be executed on a computer local to the user.

63. The system of claim 59, wherein the user interface generator and the utilities calculation engine comprise computer programs adapted to be executed on a computer remote to the user.

64. The system of claim 63, wherein the user may be coupled to the remote computer or server by an Internet connection, wide area network, local area network, wire line or wireless connection.